

STATEWIDE STRATEGIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2010-2030

April 2010



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APPROVED:

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State of Georgia

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Date_____

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I. Executive Summary

Over the past few decades, Georgia's population and economy grew rapidly, and our unique world-class transportation assets were critical to that success. The Port of Savannah, Hartsfield Jackson International Airport, five major Interstate highways, and Georgia's extensive network of Class 1 freight-rail assets (third largest in the country) have positioned the state as a major gateway for East Coast logistics. These assets also support mobility and high quality of life for all of Georgia's citizens. Over 98 percent of all Georgians live within 20 miles of a four-lane or Interstate highway. Our roads are the best maintained in the country and among the safest in the Southeast. In regards to transit, metro Atlanta has an extensive rail system, which was among the first of the new urban systems in the nation. Cities and towns in the rest of the state have done much with limited resources. In fact, Georgia has one of the largest rural transit networks east of the Mississippi.

However, rather than investing to preserve and extend our competitive advantage in transportation, Georgia has been under-investing and “coasting” on past success. Today, Georgia invests less than the national average as a share of its GDP and devotes fewer resources per capita to transportation than any US state except Tennessee.¹ The lack of investment and improvement to these assets has clearly eroded the state's transportation performance on measures that drive economic competitiveness. In metro areas, many of the most glaring performance issues are congestion related. Congestion places a direct financial burden on families through wasted time, wasted fuel (referred to as “congestion costs”), and reduced trip reliability. It also restricts potential places for employment. For employers, congestion shrinks the pool of available talent (i.e., the number of workers that can reach a potential job site within 45 minutes) and erodes supply-chain efficiency. In rural areas, performance is improving on most measures, but key gaps remain around highway safety, economic development, and access to the state's transportation network.

At current funding levels, performance will continue to deteriorate, threatening our ability to compete for jobs and growth in the future. As early as 2012, Georgia's motor-fuel dollars could prove insufficient to match future federal transportation funds. But even if Georgia finds a way to match federal dollars and invests all of them wisely, existing state and federal resources will not stretch far enough. Over the next 20 years, congestion costs across all of Georgia's metro areas will increase dramatically, and many transit services will be reduced or eliminated due to lack of operating funds. In metro Atlanta, congestion costs will double, and the pool of talent available to employers within 45 minutes will shrink by 33 percent compared with today. Medium-sized cities in Georgia will go from being attractive, convenient places to live to having

¹ 2006 FHWA and National Transit Database statistics

congestion levels similar to Charlotte, Miami, or even Atlanta. Rural areas will see little expansion of the Governor's Road Improvement Program (GRIP) or other freight corridors. Finally, freight-oriented businesses and commercial shippers will experience far more delays and less reliability in their supply chains, as much needed investments in capacity and capability are out of reach. Overall, Georgia's leadership position in freight and logistics—and the 1 in 10 jobs that freight supports—will be at risk.

SETTING A NEW COURSE

Alternatively, a new investment strategy supported by additional resources could transform our transportation network and create over \$480 billion in GDP growth for Georgia over the next 30 years and generate up to 425,000 new jobs. These new resources should be invested across three broad categories:

- 1. Statewide freight and logistics.** By investing \$15 billion over the next 20 years in new limited-access bypasses, rail capability improvements, GRIP corridors that align with high-volume freight routes, and improvements that address the worst bottlenecks and connectivity gaps on the network, the state could generate \$100-115 billion in additional GDP growth and 90,000 new jobs.
- 2. People mobility in metro Atlanta.** In metro Atlanta, the formula for reducing congestion costs, improving trip reliability, and addressing “shrinking talent pools” for employers has three equally important components: demand management; supply expansion focused on employment centers and reliable modes; and better matching the supply and demand by coordinating transportation investment with future development patterns. The reliable modes with the highest return for the state have a “dual purpose” infrastructure, like “managed lanes.” Dual-purpose investments are those that can be used by both car drivers (90+ percent of all commuters in any region-wide scenario) and transit users (e.g., Bus Rapid Transit, express bus, and vanpools). Managed lanes are lanes where drivers pay tolls in exchange for a reliable minimum travel speed. In some of the major employment centers, transit ridership is very high and is critical to their continued growth. As a result, the strategy for Atlanta also includes rail transit and emphasizes the following priorities: first, keep the core rail system operating efficiently; then, expand “short haul” lines that connect to the core (e.g., streetcars, trolleys, short-distance light rail “loops”); finally, as resources become available, add longer-haul rail (e.g., suburban light rail, commuter and intercity rail) selectively to transform the network over time. The investment required in new capacity is ~\$29-36 billion, with ~\$8-11 billion coming from tolls and other user fees (e.g., parking fees). The benefit is up to ~250,000 jobs and \$170 billion in GDP growth.
- 3. People mobility in rest of state.** People mobility in rural areas and medium-sized cities is well supported by the current network, though continued investment to fund the long-range plans is critical. New capacity and safety needs are estimated at ~\$14 billion over the next 20 years. In the urban areas, demand management and coordinating transportation investment with development patterns will also be critical—adding 30-50 percent additional impact for every dollar invested. Taken

together, these investments and policy enhancements result in 89,000 additional new jobs and \$49 billion in GDP.

INVESTMENTS INCLUDED BY FUNDING LEVEL

			Level 1: Existing funds no direct fees (\$12.19B ¹ avail.)	Level 2: Existing funds with direct fees ² (\$20.29B ¹ avail.)	Level 3: Burning platform and econ. growth (\$57B ¹ avail.)	Level 4: Transform GA's transp. network (\$63B ¹ avail.)
Address today's burning platform	People mobility: metro Atlanta	▪ HOT lanes				
		– Base network (~240 miles)		✓	✓	✓
		– Full network (add'l 120 miles)			✓	✓
		▪ BRT/Express		✓	✓	✓
		▪ Arterials				
		– Suburban network (~1500 miles)	✓			
		– Base central network ³ (300-400 miles)		✓	✓	✓
		– Full central network (add'l 200 miles)			✓	✓
		▪ Core transit system				
		– Reduced operations (50-70% of current)	✓	✓		
		– Full (100%) operations			✓	✓
Enable and support economic growth engines	People mobility: rest of state	▪ Base network (~\$7B)	✓	✓	✓	✓
		▪ Full network (add'l \$7B)			✓	✓
	Freight transport	▪ Savannah port last-mile	✓	✓	✓	✓
		▪ Interstate interchanges	✓	✓	✓	✓
	People mobility: metro Atlanta	▪ Streetcars and "short trip" transit				
		– Beltline		✓	✓	✓
		– Other streetcars/ premium circulators			✓	✓
	Freight transport	▪ NW bypass			✓	✓
		▪ Rail improvements			✓	✓
		▪ Intermodal/GRIP connectivity			✓	✓
Transform Georgia's transportation network	People mobility: metro Atlanta	▪ Longhaul transit (e.g. , light and heavy rail)				✓
	Statewide people mobility	▪ Metro "big ticket" road projects ⁴				
		▪ Commuter and intercity rail (between Metro Atlanta and other Georgia cities/towns)				✓

1 In 2008 dollars through 2030; available resources allocated towards CapEx and O&M costs; O&M costs through 2040 add an additional \$1B to Level 3 and \$2B to Level 4

2 Direct fees include tolls and parking fees.

3 "Base central network" means the arterial road improvements are focused on employment centers. However, some suburban arterial road investments would also be made.

4 Metro "big ticket" road projects include a tunnel connecting GA 400 and I-675, a tunnel from I-75 to I-85 under the top end of I-285, and a "cap" from the Brookwood Interchange to I-20 over the Downtown Connector.

Source: Kimley-Horn; team analysis

Collectively, these transformational investments represent ~\$65 billion in new capacity across multiple transportation modes over the next 20-30 years (capital and operations). These investments complement planned investments in maintenance and operations of the existing highway and transit system, and serve as competitive differentiators that can keep Georgia on the leading edge of mobility for people and goods. Further,

the investments described above have been prioritized or tiered, so they can be phased in over time as flexible, new resources become available.² For example, if Georgia is limited to existing, road-specific funds or tolls, nearly all available dollars will be deployed for road and highway programs that address what data shows are today's worst problems or "the burning platform."³ These investments are the most cost-effective given the way Georgia's cities and towns have developed, and they are consistent with the legal restrictions on the state's funding sources. However, if additional sources come online that can be flexed across modes, Georgia can "support future growth engines" and "transform the network" in ways not currently possible. This means substantial investments in freight, transit improvements in metro areas, and over time, an intercity passenger rail program that connects our state.

The time to act is now. Georgia has a clear plan to transform its transportation network, dramatically improve performance, and as the state emerges from the recession, reclaim its job-growth lead in the South and US. The stakes are high—425,000 new jobs and \$480 billion in economic benefit are on the table. Early and robust investment in our transportation network is a proven and vital way to secure Georgia's future economic leadership and prosperity.

² System performance was measured using a regional model. The value of individual projects must be determined using more detailed project analysis.

³ While some federal funds can be flexed to transit, it would not be enough to address today's core transit system needs, as flexed funds would then no longer be available for other needed uses. Additionally these federal funds could not be used for operations and maintenance which is the funding category most in need of additional funds.